

15 Francis St

Neport, June 1st 1891

Dear Little

Permit me to propound
a series of Coundra's questions.

Why should not the reproduction of the
Columbus Caravel be built in Spain?

Why should she not be built by
order of ~~and for~~ the Spanish Government?
and under the supervision of the ablest archi-
tect of the Spanish navy?

Why should she not be manned
by a Spanish crew? and

Why not sail from Pater I
make the "Wakings" & proceed thence to
New York under the Spanish flag (with Chris-
topher Columbus's "Carter" Kettle, on
board if you please) - as Spain's contribution
to the Columbian Exhibition? and,

Finally, why should not the U.S. Govern-
-ment purchase the Caravel in order to
reimburse the Spanish Government?

If you will think over this proposition

many reasons will occur to you in support of it.

In the first place Spain consents to contribute to the Exhibition. Why not contribute a Caravel? A diplomatic hint to that effect, conveyed by a special envoy (St. W. de L.) would fire the Heart of Spain, and all the Machinery of the Government would at once be put in motion to bring out from secret places, hitherto unused spears, Astrolabes, ancient Charts, models pictures of Costumes of 15th Century &c. &c. In local Museums, Old Castles, Churches, Monasteries in Spain there must be forgotten ~~treasures~~ ^{books & pictures} of this kind; and, at a proclamation from the Crown, each, and all, would yield up their treasures. Who is to utilize such treasures? A Spanish naval architect. Of my own personal knowledge I can say that the Spanish School of naval architecture is one of the best in the world. An enthusiastic naval architect would take hold of such a scheme with avidity; and all the resources of the Country would be at his Command.

Why build her in Spain? Because

3.
it is in Spain where they build, to this
day the survival of the Caravel; viz the
Xebec and the felucca.

It is a curious fact, often noticed by officers,
~~who~~ have cruised about the Coasts of Spain, France,
Portugal, & Italy, that one frequently meets with
Coasters of those Countries that bear a singular
resemblance, both in build & in rig, to pictures of
vessels of past centuries; the style of building
has been handed down from father to son.

for generations past. The conservative spirit is strong in
Spain. If you go alongside of any of these craft,
as I have done, you will notice a very rough and
primitive style of construction, that would be simply
impossible to represent, or to imitate in this
Country; the style of rigging, the appearance of
the ropes is all of the most primitive character;
and the Cut of the Sails, & the Color and quality
of the Canvas, made of coarse hemp, instead of
flax, or Cotton, could not be obtained here.

A greater nautical curiosity, ~~to say~~, could hardly
exist in New York more than a Xebec, such
as could be found in the Mediterranean to day.
Now fancy, if you please, a weather beaten

Xebec sailing up N.Y. bay under the Spanish
 flag, with black-eyed dark-skinned
 Mariners dressed in strange costumes,
 unable to utter a word of English!
 What a sensation it would create! The
 form of the hull, the style of masts, rigging
 and the sails each in turn would excite the
 liveliest Curiosity—Every thing, each detail
 would ~~be~~ ^{be} taken a far off, strange land,
 to most of the lookers on but little known.
 The most critical eye would fail to detect the
 imitation, for the very simple reason that it would
 not be imitation, it would be real. The Xebec
 built in this country ~~would~~ might, and probably
 would excite ridicule. No conscientious pains
 taking labor could hide the fact that it was imita-
 tion—Good imitation passably; but still imitation.
 But the one built in Spain, where they have been
 building & sailing them for hundreds of years,
 would be the real Simon pure article; and
 excite wonder instead of mirth. Now give
 your Xebec a polacre rig, as many of them
 have, and build her up abaft the main mast
 so as to represent the old half deck and

and the quarter deck and you have the Caravel of Christopher Complete.

Now let her set out from Palos, pursue the course taken in 1492 (Convoys if you like by a small steamer of war, to yank her through Calcutta in order to save time, pass through the West Indies, or rather the Bahamas, to fill up with evidence, of tropical climates, and proceed thence to N.Y. and sail up the bay, the rusk cut the bottom showing grass at the water line, the blacking washed off the ropes, & wood at the sides, in short weather stained. The flags of Castile & Aragon streaming from her mast, all this with her strange looking crew would present a sight one might well wish to see having seen not willingly for jet.

But we will not ask Spain to do this thing for nothing - It will be private, secretly, confidentially understood, that on the closing of the Exhibition, the Caravel will be purchased by the Columbian Exhibition Committee, so as to reimburse the Spanish Government for its outlay. Your first step in the carrying out of this plan is to have a letter from our Secretary

6.

of State to our Minister at Madrid Com-
mending You, in general terms, to the Court
of Spain, and Explaining in very vague and
General terms only, the Object of your visit.

Presuming your Credentials, You would then
feel your way along till the right man was
encountered, possibly the Minister of Marine,
to whom you would unfold your whole plan.
You must get hold of someone who is "near
the throne" ~~stand~~, at the same time, who
will "be there". The right person you will learn
of from the Spanish Naval officers, of rank
with whom you will dine at the table of
our Minister in Madrid.

The plan has, this to recommend it; You
will insure success and at a great Economy
of TIME, [an important Element Stake it],
and MONEY—

How does that frappe you?

Yours truly
S. D. Luce